

NEWS

Sampath ties up with Asian Alliance

By Udesika Dissanayake

Sampath Bank made its first move from banking into the financial sector with the opening of an insurance desk at their Nawam Mawatha branch recently.

Asian Alliance Insurance Company the latest addition to the insurance sector which commenced its operations in December last year, tied up with Sampath Bank to provide insurance services to Sampath customers.

Its first alliance with the

bank was with the introduction of Sampath Sanhida in March which offered a critical and accident insurance cover by them free of charge to the account holder.

General Manager Sampath Bank, Mr. Anil Amarasinghe said bank insurance was a popular tool in other countries and the move was the first step from banking into the financial services sector.

"The choice of this company was because the bank was looking out for a strategic partner with most insurance companies not willing to

give a strategic holding whereas Asian Alliance was agreeable to this when the company goes public," he said at the opening of the insurance centre.

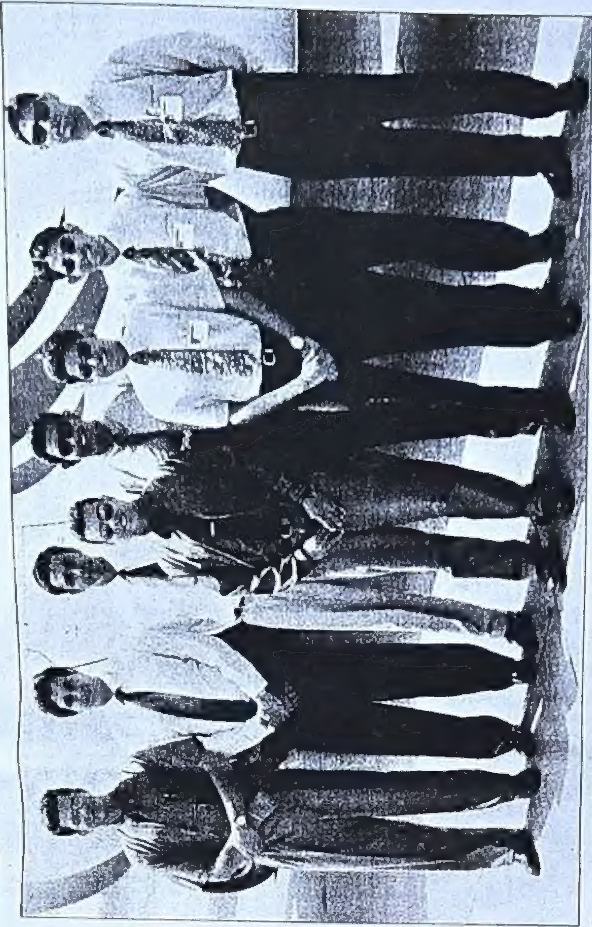
The present shareholders of the company are Asia Capital which holds a 66 per cent stake while the remaining stake is held by Richard Peris Limited.

The branch at Nawam Mawatha was chosen due to it being in a convenient location with no hassle of parking and the large number of executives working in the

complex while the two companies hope to launch several other insurance outlets at selected Sampath Bank branches Mr. Amarasinghe added.

The insurance desk at the Sampath branch will be handled by Manjula Kumarasinghe, Manager Business Development, Asian Alliance Insurance and will function during normal banking hours providing tailor made solutions to its customers. These solutions will offer personal as well as corporate needs of clients.

Flying as a career once again for young Lankans



Some young hopefuls

Becoming a pilot might seem a tough process, but when one compares it to the forms that a new student fills out in becoming a doctor, lawyer or other professional, it isn't too hard. Actually, it takes a much shorter time, and costs far less to become a trained pilot either in Sri Lanka or abroad, than to get a university education in the West.

All this is good news for youngsters who would like to be pilots some day. How exactly does one become a pilot?

The first step is to obtain a Private Pilot's License, commonly known as a PPL. Most Sri Lankans do this at one of the two local flying schools, Asian Aerospace College which is operated by Lion Air, or Asian Academy of Aeronautics which belongs to Sky Cabs.

"We have training programmes going on at all times, so it is easy for young-

pass many subjects, as well as flight tests. "One of the forms that a new student fills out is sent to the DGCA, and the government does a security check on each individual," said Capt. Romesh Mendis, Director Training at the Asian Aviation Centre.

"Once this is done, students must take a medical test, and then the DGCA gives them a Student Pilot's License."

The number of local pilots is nowhere near the demand from national airline, Sri Lanka, which recruits about 10 foreign pilots every month. At present the airline has 120 local pilots and 80 foreign pilots. The airline quietly marked a significant milestone late last year, when it commissioned its first female First Officer, Anusha Mohamed.

"We are taking in 20 Cadet Pilots between April 2000 and March 2001," said Captain Dick Hutton, Sri Lanka

However, since most Sri Lankan pilots are aiming to fly for the national carrier, it is always a good idea to make sure that one meets the minimum educational requirements of Sri Lankan Airlines. Being licensed to fly one type of aircraft, such as a Lockheed TriStar, doesn't allow one to fly another type, like an Airbus A330. So switching to another type of aircraft (known as converting) involves weeks of training in classrooms and simulators, as well as fresh flying tests and exams.

Sri Lankan Airlines maintains strict standards for its pilots, and goes to great lengths to ensure those standards are maintained by the new and converted pilots. Hence the long time taken over training, the airline officials say.

The Sri Lankan training programme has been kept busy with the huge effort of

United States - Airgo International in Chicago and the United States Flight Academy in Texas. This allows Sri Lankans to undergo much of their training for the CPL in Sri Lanka, before going on to the USA to complete the course and the tests. Once one gets a CPL, it's a process of waiting for the next intake of Cadet Pilots at Sri Lankan Airlines.

Qualified candidates first go through an interview. Then they are given a three and half hour written test for technical knowledge. Those who top the list are then sent for a psychometric test. Shortlisted candidates are then sent for simulator tests in India or Singapore. Although this is a costly process, the candidates must be checked for their ability and aptitude to fly.

Once a candidate gets through all these stages, there is a final interview. Those

Science Land launches Thibus Word Translator

By Akshay Amer

Science Land Corporation (Pvt) Ltd. has introduced the Thibus product range, a Sinhala-English Word Translator, the latest addition to their range.

The word translator uses a database of 100,000 English words and 130,000 uses Sinhala words to translate. The software package translates from English to Sinhala and vice versa through an easy to use interface. It also includes over 35,000 technical terms from law, medicine, architecture, accounting, etc. that can be individually activated and de-activated. The word translator offers instant switching between the two languages and also acts as a thesaurus for both Sinhala and English. It also accepts wildcard character

word searches, where letters are represented by symbols when the spellings are not known. The selections that are made can be easily transferred to the Windows application through its cut and paste features.

The product package contains a "hardware lock" for protection purposes, which needs to be attached to a computer's parallel port, the software CD/diskette, manual and transparent stickers containing Sinhala characters. The characters may be pasted on top of the keys, which can be converted to the standard Sinhala keyboard, phonetic form or even individually configured to the user's preference using the software provided.

Science Land Corporation (Pvt) Ltd. was formed by three university undergraduates and started operations in 1994.

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